

In the eyes of many students, AIDS is still Someone Else's problem

seems that it's a disease that's only transmitted among the homosexual population."

Similar myths about AIDS abound. Says Georgetown University junior Thomas Jones: "I know somebody here who thinks that she can catch AIDS from sushi. You know, if the cook is gay and he cuts himself and the blood gets into the sushi." At the University of Maryland, Karen, a senior, worries about a less exotic means of transmission. "It makes you wonder about using water fountains," she says. "Someone could have a cut on their lip and you might have a cut on your lip and who knows?" Despite all the lessons about AIDS, not much accurate information seems to be getting across. "No one seems to know the right story or if there is one," says Ingrid Kane, a Penn sophomore. "I have a friend who is nervous about talking on the phone, nervous about sharing glasses, nervous about everything, but every now and then will have a few too many [drinks] and sleep around."

Even among those students who say they are more circumspect, the definition of caution is relative. Some say the old days of just jumping into bed are numbered. But what is replacing the no-questions-asked one-night stand? "Maybe there's second-nighters and third-nighters," says Deb Pankey, a University of Illinois senior, with no apparent irony. "I think people are still kind of hesitant about sleeping with someone" on the first night, she says.

Monogamy is looking more desirable to certain groups of students—although experts say that also reflects a growing

conservatism among students and predates awareness of AIDS. "The '70s were a time when there were fewer prohibitions about multiple partners, but people realized that having sex with everyone was like having sex with no one," says Michael Carrera, past president of the American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists. "Inevitably there was going to be a shift toward more meaningful sex. I've talked to many young people who said their fantasies were realized, but what they were hoping for turned out to be not so terrific." However, the possibility of catching a fatal disease for a few moments of fun may accelerate the trend toward fidelity, says research psychologist Sully Blotnick, who has been surveying student sexual activities for more than 20 years. He says that only 19 percent of today's students approve of one-night stands compared to 48 percent in 1967. Jon, a Penn senior, regrets his only one-night adventure—on a road trip to Smith College a year and a half ago. "I was incredibly drunk and this girl was very amorous toward me," he says apologetically. Once was enough. Now he feels secure with a steady girlfriend.

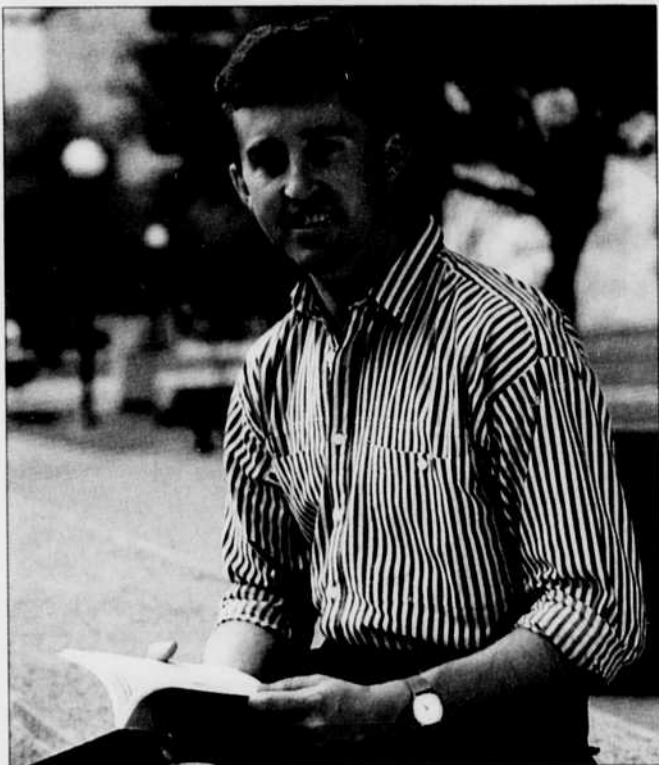
The return to monogamy is most pronounced among gay students, who are generally more educated about AIDS than heterosexuals. At Columbia, for example, there's wide agreement that the gay social scene has changed radically in the last few years. Bathhouses and cruising have been replaced by platonic friendships or long-term relationships. Age has a lot to do with attitude, however. Older students who were sexually active before the dangers of AIDS became

with him; his roommate kicked him out; his boss fired him without explanation. He found it hard to concentrate on his studies but resolved to complete his degree. One day in class he noticed that all the seats around him were vacant. "Students were afraid to sit by me," he says. "Others began to avoid me. Nobody knew what to say." One professor began greeting him each day: "Hello, Kenneth, how are you doing? Are you feeling well today?" he would ask loudly. "It was so embarrassing," Durham says. "I feel kind of like a leper."

'I have two years': In the past two years, 30 of Durham's clients and 10 of his friends have died of AIDS. He has counseled 10 heterosexuals with the disease, two of them female. One of the men got it from a prostitute; a woman got it from a bisexual. Many are very

young. Durham knows 15- and 16-year-olds who got AIDS from sex. He knows, too, that although many young people believe they'll never meet anyone with AIDS, the disease is already present on the nation's campuses. "Students don't realize what's going to happen," he says. "I feel sorry for them. They're going to lose a lot of people if they don't protect themselves. All of us, straight and gay, are potential victims of AIDS. Our destiny is really in our own hands." Durham is now job-hunting and looking forward to graduation. "Minimally, I have two years," he says. "You can't plan much beyond that, anyway. AIDS has added much more focus to my life. I know it sounds corny. But I want to make my life count, and I want to make sure I enjoy my life."

BARBARA BURGOWER in Houston



JANICE RUBIN

The test came back positive: Durham on the UH campus